

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SCUL, NI, (FESTAC)

SUBJECT: DEPTOFF MEETING WITH DONALDSON -- AUGUST 27

REFERENCE: STATE 199180

1. U.S. ZONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN JEFFERSON DONALDSON AND HIS FUND-RAISER WALKER WILLIAMS MET WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS AUGUST 27 TO REVIEW FESTAC PREPARATIONS. DONALDSON SAID HE RECENTLY MET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF A NUMBER OIL COMPANIES, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM CONGRESSMAN DIGGS' OFFICE AND COUNSELLOR OBE OF THE NIGERIAN EMBASSY. AS RESULT OF THAT MEETING, DONALDSON AND WILLIAMS HAVE LOWERED THEIR SIGHT ON AMOUNT OF DONATIONS FROM MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS;- INITIALLY THEY PROJECTED ORCH OAERR G COST OF SHOULD GIVE DOLS 100,000, WITH 15 DONORS COVERINGCOST OF PARTICIPANTS' TRAVEL. NOW THEY ARE TALKING OF THE LARGEST DONATION BEING DOLS 25,000 AND EXTENDING LIST OF POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTORS TO SOLICIT SMALLER AMOUNTS. WALKER WILLIAMS STATED THAT LETTER CAMPAIGN WOULD START THIS WEEK, WITH RESPONSES EXPECTED WITHIN 3 TO 4 WEEKS.

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2. ON SUBJECT OF MORE PUBLICITY, ESPECIALLY AMONG BLACK AMERICANS, DONALDSON STATED EXPLICITLY THAT HE HAD DOUBTS THERE WOULD BE ENOUGH ROOMS AVAILABLE IN LAGOS FOR ANY

LARGE INFLUX OF AMERICAN VISITORS. THEREFORE, HE WAS RELUCTANT TO STIMULATE A LARGE INTEREST FOR FEAR THAT THERE WOULD BE NO WAY TO ACCOMMODATE THEM.

3. DONALDSON STRESSED THE NEED FOR AMERICAN MEDICAL TEAM AND FOR A FOOD FACILITY SERVING AMERICAN FOOD FOR AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS. WHILE EXACT ARRANGEMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETED, DONALDSON INTENDS VISIT LAGOS IN NEAR FUTURE WITH DR. FLETCHER ROBINSON, DOCTOR HE HAS RECRUITED TO HEAD MEDICAL TEAM. AS FOR FOOD FACILITY, NIGERIANS HAVE LET DONALDSON KNOW THAT NIGERIANS PLAN TO TAKE CARE OF ALL MATTERS RELATED TO FOOD.

4. DONALDSON WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SEPARATE PAVILION FOR FESTAC, BUT INDICATED HE IS GETTING AMBIGUOUS SIGNALS FROM NIGERIANS. WHEREAS CHIEF ENAHORO HAD STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT PAVILION WOULD BE WELCOMED, AND THAT SPACE WOULD BE AVAILABLE, COMMANDER FINGESI MAY NOT AGREE. WHEN QUERIED, DONALDSON STATED THERE WOULD STILL BE TIME TO ERECT SUCH A PAVILION, IF NIGERIANS WOULD PROVIDE THE SITE.

5. DONALDSON ALSO REPORTED HIS COMMITTEE IS FIRING UP LIST OF PARTICIPANTS, TO ENSURE THOSE ON LIST ARE COMMITTED TO FESTAC IDEA. HE STATED THEY DID NOT NEED ANY PRIMA DONNAS. ALL PARTICIPANTS WILL PERFORM WITHOUT PAY. NEW LIST WILL BE AVAILABLE THIS WEEK. 1500 STILL PROJECTED NUMBER U.S. PARTICIPANTS.

6. BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTY IN GETTING ANSWERS FROM NIGERIANS ON NUMBER OF IMPORTANT QUESTIONS, DONALDSON IS PLANNING VISIT LAGOS AROUND SEPTEMBER 8-22.

7. FYI -- AFTER MEETING, DONALDSON INDICATED THAT PART OF HIS PROBLEMS WITH NIGERIANS MAY RESIDE IN THE PERSON OF ONWACHI, WHO WAS PROFESSOR AT HOWARD FOR MANY YEARS, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHO PREVIOUSLY HAD TANGLED WITH DONALDSON ON QUESTION OF ORGANIZING AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN FESTAC 74. DONALDSON CLAIMED THAT ONWACHI WAS SPREADING UNTRUTHS ABOUT HIM AND IN GENERAL MISREPRESENTING HIS POSITION, MAINLY OUT OF PERSONAL SPITE. WE HAVE NO WAY OF JUDGING ACCURACY OF THIS STATEMENT, BUT DONALDSON SEEMED QUITE CONVINCED THAT ONWACHI IS HIS ENEMY. END FYI.

8. COMMENT -- IN GENERAL, DONALDSON AND WILLIAMS SHOWED GREATER DEGREE OF OPENNESS IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS WITH US, AND SAID HARD DECISIONS WILL HAVE TO BE MADE SOON. ALSO ATTENDING MEETING WAS SAMUEL G. THOMSEN, CAO-DESIGNATE FOR LAGOS. WE URGED DONALDSON TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE

EMBASSY, AND HE AGREED TO DO SO.

9. FYI -- AF/W RECEIVED AUGUST 30 COPY OF PERSONAL LETTER FROM CONGRESSMAN DIGGS TO THE SECRETARY (INFO TO VICE PRESIDENT) URGING SECRETARY TO SUPPORT FESTAC. THRUST OF LETTER WAS THAT U.S. ZONE WITHOUT SUFFICIENT CLOUT TO GARNER FROM DONORS THE 1.5 MILLION DOLLARS REQUIRED TO MAKE U.S. PARTICIPATION A SUCCESSFUL REALITY, AND SECRETARY SH"ULD SOMEHOW INTERCEDE IN FUND-RAISING EFFORT. END FYI.

10. SINCE PREPARING FOREGOING, FOLLOWING MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM DONALDSON FOR AMBASSADOR EASUM:

QTE -- ARRIVING LAGOS ON PA-190 WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8 AT 1:55 P.M. TO CONFER WITH FESTAC OFFICIALS ON URGENT PROBLEMS. WOULD LIKE CONFER WITH AMBASSADOR/STAFF ON MUTUAL CONCERNS DURING VISIT. PLEASE WIRE CONFIRMATION. UNQTE.

11. AS STATED REFTTEL, DEPARTMENT HAS CONTINUING NEED FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON STATUS OF FESTAC PREPARATIONS AND EMBASSY VIEWS ON SAME. ROBINSON

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